

Reporter wins appeal of JFK contempt charge

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NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A judge threw out a contempt finding against a television reporter who revealed the names of witnesses during a 1960s investigation into President Kennedy's assassination.

In a one-paragraph decision, the state 4th Circuit Court of Appeal said Louisiana's grand jury secrecy law did not apply to WDSU-TV reporter Richard Angelico. He had received the names from an investigator for former District Attorney Jim

Garrison.

The ruling reversed Angelico's three-month suspended jail term and \$100 fine, which was imposed by a lower court judge who said he acted to protect the secrecy of grand jury proceedings.

Hidden for 21 years, the records contain statements made by witnesses in Garrison's grand jury probe of the 1963 assassination.

Gary Raymond, an investigator for Garrison, said he was told in 1974 by Garrison's predecessor, District Attorney Harry Connick, to destroy the records. He put them in his trunk instead.

Raymond gave them to Angelico last year when Connick told a federal Assassination Records Review Board the files had disappeared when Garrison left office. The board was established to review the government's investigation into the assassination.

Angelico broadcast the names of some of those who went before the grand jury before turning the records over to the board. Connick brought the contempt charges against Angelico and Raymond for violating grand jury secrecy laws.

But Angelico's lawyers argued

that the secrecy law applied only to members of a grand jury, those present at a grand jury meeting and persons with "confidential access" to grand jury information.

The appeals court agreed. It did not rule on Angelico's contention that his free-press rights were violated by the contempt citation.

"We thought that we were correct all along and how could someone who came into the original JFK transcripts do anything but publish them in light of Mr. Connick's testimony before the commission in which he blamed

others for their disappearance," Angelico said.

The records are still in the hands of the review board, which said it wants to make them public but is holding off until their legal status is cleared by the courts.

Raymond is free on bail while awaiting word on his appeal.

Garrison believed CIA hard-liners had Kennedy killed to keep the United States in Vietnam. In 1969, the prosecutor put businessman Clay Shaw on trial on charges of conspiring to kill Kennedy. The jury deliberated less than an hour before acquitting Shaw.